



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: August 19, 2003 (03-38)  
Contact: Dr. Kathy Connell (360) 902-1835  
Linda Waring (360) 902-1815

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

## **WSDA seeks permanent rule to protect Washington birds**

OLYMPIA – To safeguard Washington’s birds against Exotic Newcastle Disease, the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is proposing to permanently adopt a rule that now prohibits moving birds into this state from locations where the disease is confirmed. The rule also requires anyone organizing a bird show or other avian event to immediately notify WSDA at (360) 902-1878. Bird event participants must certify in writing that their birds and equipment have not been in areas where Exotic Newcastle Disease is known to occur.

WSDA is taking public comments on the proposal at 2 p.m. Aug. 26 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Cafeteria Conference Room of the Natural Resources Building at 1111 Washington St. in Olympia. Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. Aug. 25, and may be sent by mail to Dr. Kathy Connell, Acting State Veterinarian, P.O. Box 42577, Olympia, WA 98504, by fax to (360) 902-2087, or by e-mail to [kconnell@agr.wa.gov](mailto:kconnell@agr.wa.gov). If adopted, the rule will go into effect Aug. 29.

Exotic Newcastle Disease is not a human health threat and does not affect the safety of poultry meat or eggs. It affects the health of many species of birds and is spread by contact with infected birds or contaminated materials. The virus can survive for weeks in warm, humid environments. Signs of illness in birds include sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge, diarrhea, a drop in egg production and death. The virus is so deadly many birds die without showing signs.

Exotic Newcastle is a foreign animal disease that has not been discovered in Washington. After it was diagnosed last October in backyard poultry flocks in Los Angeles County, Calif., it spread to commercial egg-laying facilities in that state. The disease was also discovered in backyard flocks in Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas. As a result, some 13 countries placed restrictions on U.S. or California poultry products or banned products entirely. WSDA adopted an emergency rule in January to keep infected birds and contaminated materials out of the state.

Federal quarantines have been released from counties in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas. Veterinarians and animal health inspectors in California are surveying and sampling to ensure there is no disease left in that state. The last incident was in May. In total, more than three million birds were euthanized to stop the disease from spreading.

“Fighting a disease like Exotic Newcastle takes cooperation from state and federal regulatory veterinarians, other agencies, bird and poultry owners and the public,” says Dr. Connell. “Because it’s one of the most serious infectious poultry diseases, continuing this rule is just one more step to assure protection for Washington bird and poultry owners.”

For more information on Exotic Newcastle Disease, visit WSDA’s Web site at [agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/Diseases/ExoticNewcastle/default.htm](http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/Diseases/ExoticNewcastle/default.htm).